Invitation to PDP leader to session on Kashmir

3096. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA:
PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the U.S. Government plans to hold a session on Kashmir and invited PDP leader Mehbooba to attend it;

(b) whether they have chosen to ignore the Indian viewpoint at the same time explaining that it was a routine scenario, which is conducted regularly in the USA; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by Government to ensure that it does not adversely affect our interests?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) The U.S. State Department had sponsored a "Conference on Kashmir Update" on 1st July, 2001 in Washington D.C. It had invited a few public personalities from India, the United States and Pakistan. The Indian invitees, including the PDP leader, declined the invitation.

(b) The organisation of conferences and seminars is an internal matter of the U.S. Department of State. However, the Government believes that the involvement of the US Department of State in organising this conference was politically and diplomatically inappropriate.

(c) The United States has conveyed that the conference does not constitute or reflect any change in its position on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir and has reiterated that it does not seek to play a mediatory role between India and Pakistan.

Chakma Hajong refugees

3097. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI :
DR. ABRAR AHMED:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:-

(a) whether Chakma Hajong refugees issue is a major bone of contention between India and Bangladesh;